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District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AGENT INDICTED FOR MAKING FALSE OFFICIAL STATEMENT

PHOENIX-- A federal grand jury in Phoenix returned a 1-count indictment against Joe T. Villa, age 37, of Mesa, Arizona, for making a false statement.

The indictment alleges that on July 25, 2005, Villa fabricated arrest and removal records relating to detainee Rivera-Mendoza, in an official government computer system. At the time, Villa was employed as an Immigration Enforcement Agent at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Service Processing Center, Florence, Arizona.

The federal indictment charges Villa with violating Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 1001. A conviction for making a false statement carries a maximum penalty of 5 years.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General. The prosecution is being handled by Michelle Hamilton-Burns, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-0709-PHX
RELEASE NUMBER: 2006-132(Villa)

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